THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) I visited the Republic of Korea from 2—4 April 2002 at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of ROK. During the visit I called on President Kim Dae Jung and had discussions with my counterpart Mr. Choi Sung-hong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The first meeting of the India-ROK Joint Commission was also held during this visit for which I led the Indian delegation.

The subject discussed included enhancement of high level political exchanges, trade and investment matters, defence exchanges, cooperation against terrorism, exchanges in S&T, IT and communications, cultural matters and cooperation in multilateral organisations.

It was agreed that discussions on counter-terrorism will be included in the annual Foreign Office Consultations. The Republic of Korea also conveyed its continued support for finalizing the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the United Nations.

India's exports to ROK accounted for 1% of India's total exports in 2000-01 and imports from ROK 1.56% of India's total imports in the same year. Ways land means to enhance trade and investment flows between in the countries were discussed in the Joint Commission meeting. It was agreed that further efforts should be made to promote both trade and investment. The next meeting of the Joint Trade Committee will be held in the second half of this year.

Use of Internet

*526. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that use of Internet in the country is not at the expected level;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for promotion of Internet in rural, remote and hilly areas during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN):(a) and (b) At present, the country has approximately 40 lakhs Internet Subscribers. The growth of Internet Subscribers during the last 3 years has been as follows:

1999-2000	:	9.4 lakhs
2000-2001	:	30.4 lakhs
2001-2002	:	40.0 lakhs (approximately)

(c) The innovative steps taken by the Government for promotion of Internet services in rural, remote and hilly areas for the last three years is given at Annexure.

Annexure

The following steps have' been taken by Government for promotion of Internet Services in the country for rural, hilly and remote areas:

Number of Internet nodes installed in the country-427.

Internet facility has been made available in all District Headquarters of the country.

Internet facility has been extended to the customers on local call charge basis to the nearest node

internet facility has been extended to 5625 Block Headquarters of the country.

Internet nodes have been set up in Remote & Hilly areas like Shillong, Agartala, R.K. Pur, Aizwal, Dimapur, Itanagar, Passighat, Imphal, Kohima, Almora, Pithoragarh, Gopeshwar, Solan, Ooty, Namchi, Geyzing, Rangpo etc.

BSNL, through the scheme of Internet Dhabas set up through franchises, has provided Internet Dial-up connections to 3051 Internet Dhabas.

To promote proliferation of Internet in Rural Areas, BSNL, is offering free Internet access for the internet Dhabas in the Rural Block Headquarters.

The Internet Dhaba franchises are also eligible for 25 per cent

of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) access charges as commission.

Establishing Community Information Centres in the 487 Blocks of North East with V-SAT conneetivity

Development of roads under Golden Quadrangle Scheme

*527. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

DR. (MS.) P. SELVIE DAS:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount collected through petrol and diesel cess to develop the road infrastructure since commencement of cess collection, till date;

(b) the details of the road development in various States under the Golden Quadrangel Scheme together with the length of road developed (in kilometers) and the amount allocated for the purpose, State-wise; and

(c) whether any timeframe has been fixed for completion of these projects, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) An amount of Rs. 15034 crore has been collected through petrol and diesel cess upto November, 2001.

(b) State-wise details of lengths of roads under Golden Quadrilateral Project are given in the statement enclose (see below). Amounts are allocated project-wise and not State-wise. The total amount allocated for implementation of Golden Quadrilateral Project is Rs. 25,055 crores.